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Popular Education.

The Power of Common Schools to Redeem the State from Social Vices and Crimes.

Letter from E. A. Andrews, Esq.

NEW BRITAIN, CONN., DEC. 8, 1847.

HON. HORACE MANN,

DEAR SIR,—Your note of the 3d instant was received last evening, and I feel that I owe you an apology for my apparent neglect in not replying to the inquiries contained in your Circular. I can only plead in excuse the continual hindrance occasioned by the pressure of my previous engagements, which have left me neither time nor strength for any thing else. Even now, after so long a time, my reply, from the continuance of the same engagements, must be made in haste, though the opinions which I may express upon the subject proposed have, I trust, been formed with due deliberation.

In reply to your first and second questions, permit me simply to remark, that I have been connected with the department of education, either as pupil or as teacher, for more than fifty years. I have instructed both in the country and in cities; in the former I have, for the most part, had the charge of only a few select pupils; in the latter, for about twenty years, I was connected with large institutions of instruction. I have no means of determining with any tolerable approach to accuracy the whole number of my pupils, nor the proportion of each sex.

From the nature of the inquiry proposed in your third question, although it may seem to require that its reply should take a mathematical form, it is obviously impossible to give to it the character of mathematical certainty. It requires the expression of an opinion respecting the probable success of a proposed system of education, differing in very important particulars from any thing connected with our experience;

and still, our experience of the results of other system, is properly and even necessarily made, by analogy, the basis of our judgments in regard to the success of that which is proposed.

In all our past experience, that most important element of success in the system now proposed,—the conspiring influence for good of all the children and youth of the whole community,—so far at least as the character of this influence is improved by careful training during the hours devoted to instruction,—has been in a great measure wanting. The importance of this element, in conjunction with the general substitution of well qualified teachers in place of those of inferior qualifications, can never be fully appreciated without a previous trial; but still enough is known, from the result of different degrees of approximation to these conditions, to lead us to believe that there is little danger of forming too high an estimate of their importance.

Your question indeed supposes many adverse influences still to remain in the families and the societies with which the children are connected, and that these of necessity continue, as heretofore, to form a part of that training to which each child must be subjected. That such influences must, in different degrees, prove injurious to the character of the children exposed to them, none can doubt. It would be folly to look for perfect moral health in the midst of moral contagion; and if to these sources of corruption, ever operating upon natures easily seduced to evil, we add the mischievous results which must often spring directly from the imperfection and positive error attending the best systems of human instruction, we shall be in little danger of imagining, that all evil can be at once eradicated from society by means of improved systems of early education.

But while we must necessarily give their due weight to considerations such as these, when estimating the probability of training men and women to absolute perfection, it is still to be remembered that such is not, in the present case, the problem proposed for our solution. The enquiry is not, "what proportion of the youth trained in the manner proposed may be expected to possess characters absolutely faultless," but "what per-centage might be reasonably expected to go out into the world possessing such characters that their existence would be a benefit and not a detriment, an honor and not a shame to society."

Viewing the subject in this light, I do not hesitate

to express my conviction that such an education as your question supposes, continued for so long a period as twelve years, and including all the children of the community, would remove a very large portion of the evils with which society is now burdened. I need not say, that I would be far from attributing so important results to any system of merely intellectual training, or even to the most perfect combination of intellectual, physical, and moral discipline, to the exclusion of that which is strictly religious. Such a qualification of my meaning might have been necessary, on account of the limited sense in which the word education is often used, had not the necessity been removed by the express terms of the conditions annexed to the question in your circular.

It may indeed be feared that society is not yet fully prepared to put forth the effort necessary to accomplish so desirable a result; but I cannot believe that the time is very remote when its attainment will be considered an object of paramount importance. It cannot be that the millions of intelligent men, found in this and in other Christian countries, can much longer permit their feelings to be enlisted, and the resources of the communities to which they belong to be employed, in promoting objects of far inferior value while the advantages of a good system of general education are, in so great a degree, overlooked. If, as I believe, it is in the power of the people of any State, by means so simple as your question supposes, and so completely in their own power as these obviously are, so to change the whole face of society in a single generation that scarcely one or two per cent of really incorrigible members shall be found in it, it cannot be that so great a good will continue to be neglected, and the means for its attainment unemployed.

In forming our estimate of the probability of so important a result as I have supposed, it must not be forgotten, that, simple as are the means now proposed for its attainment, they have never been employed, so far as I know; in any extended community whose experience is on record. In Scotland, and of late in Prussia, a considerable approximation has been made towards reaching the supposed conditions, and with benefits, it is believed, fully corresponding with the degree of perfection of their respective systems. The Common Schools of New-England, which have done so much to elevate her character, have still fallen immeasurably short of the conditions supposed. With all their acknowledged defects, however, the instances, I believe, are few, in which those who have been trained in them, from childhood to the close of the period usually allotted to education in these schools, have afterwards, on mingling with the world, proved to be incorrigibly vicious, a burden rather than a benefit to society. The records of our criminal courts, and the doors of our penitentiaries, have seldom been opened to those who, in childhood, had been in regular daily attendance, for ten or twelve years, upon the exercises of our Common Schools, however imperfect these schools may have been in their organization, and not-

withstanding all the evil influences of uneducated associates to which the pupils have been exposed when out of school. The cell of the convict has, on the contrary, been almost uniformly occupied by those who have enjoyed few of the benefits of our Common Schools; and even the tenants of our poorhouses, it is believed, have, in most instances, belonged to the same unfortunate class.

If such have been the results of a system so obviously imperfect as that of the Common Schools of New England, may we not reasonably entertain very high expectations respecting the operation of a system in which so many of the evils of the present system shall be removed? When the mind and heart of every child shall be brought, during the school hours of twelve years, under the influence of competent, well-principled, and high-minded teachers, even those whose associations are the least desirable when out of school, cannot but carry with them into the haunts of vicious parents, such a knowledge of the obligations of virtue and of the odious and ruinous character of vice, as shall go far, in most cases, to protect them from imitating the vice which they see around them.

A generation so trained would scarcely be satisfied with having their education terminate when the elementary course provided by the public should be brought to an end. They could not fail to foster all such institutions as, in their view, should tend to advance their improvement, and to assist them in cultivating habits of mental and moral discipline. The children of such a generation would enjoy advantages which their fathers could scarcely have imagined; and when we look forward to the accumulating results from the superior advantages of each successive generation, it is difficult to repress one's feelings of anxious desire that such an experiment may be fairly tried in our country, and of joyful anticipation at the result of such an experiment upon the character of the community where it shall be made.

Very truly, Yours, &c.

E. A. ANDREWS.

Letter from Roger S. Howard, Esq.

THETFORD, VT., SEPTEMBER 1, 1847.

HON. HORACE MANN,

In reply to your inquiry, I would say that I taught school, with scarcely any interruption, fifteen years in Newburyport. I had previously, during my collegiate course of study, taught occasionally a district school in the country. Of the fifteen years I taught in Newburyport, about twelve were spent in teaching boys; the rest of the time, I had girls under my instruction. The usual number of my scholars was fifty,—the ages, for the most part, between twelve and sixteen,—and the average time of continuing in school, I should think, about three years. From this statement, it will easily be perceived about how many different children I have had under my care.

To your third inquiry, I cannot give a definite answer founded on actual experience and observation; for I have never seen the conditions you have stated fully

complied with. I have never known a community, in which *all* the children, during the term of time specified, have been sent *constantly* to well-furnished and well-arranged schools, under the care of teachers of the high moral and intellectual qualities you have supposed. But, judging from what I have seen and do know, if the conditions you have mentioned were strictly complied with;—if the attendance of the scholars could be as universal, constant and long-continued as you have stated, if the teachers were men of those high intellectual and moral qualities,—apt to teach, and devoted to their work, and favored with that blessing which the word and providence of God teach us always to expect on our honest, earnest and well-directed efforts in so good a cause,—on these conditions, and under these circumstances, I do not hesitate to express the opinion that the failures need not be,—would not be,—one per cent. Else, what is the meaning of that explicit declaration of the Bible, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it”?

I am aware that the opinion I have expressed above may by some be considered extravagant. But I have not formed or expressed it without deliberation. During all my experience as a teacher, I have never known the scholar whom, if brought within the reach of these salutary and auspicious influences for the length of time named, I should now be willing to believe, or dare to pronounce, utterly hopeless and irreclaimable. I do not mean to say that I never failed. But I do say that, in some of the most difficult and desperate cases I have ever met with, as a teacher, the result of direct, special and persevering effort was such as to create the conviction that, with more zeal, patience and perseverance, and especially with the favoring influences above alluded to, success would have been certain and complete. And this conviction became more settled and strong the longer I continued to teach.

The power of a truly enlightened and Christian system of Common School Education, is but little understood and appreciated. When parents shall begin to feel, as they ought, its importance,—when the community generally shall be willing to make the necessary efforts and sacrifices,—and when teachers of the requisite literary qualifications, and of high moral aims, shall enter upon the work with a martyr's zeal, conscious that every day they are making deathless impressions upon immortal minds,—then shall we see, as I believe, results which will greatly surpass the highest expectations of the most ardent and enthusiastic advocates of popular education.

But I am occupying more space than I intended, and will only add that I am, dear sir,

Very respectfully and truly yours,
ROGER S. HOWARD.

Letter from Miss Catherine E. Beecher.

BRATTLEBORO', AUG, 20, 1847.

HON. HORACE MANN,

DEAR SIR,—In reference to the questions you propose, I would reply, that I have been engaged directly

and personally, as a teacher, about fifteen years, in Hartford, Connecticut, and Cincinnati, Ohio. I have had a few classes of quite young children under my care, for the purpose of making some practical educational experiments, but most of my pupils, in age, have ranged from twelve to twenty. I have had pupils from every state in the Union; and though I have no precise records, I think the number cannot be less than a thousand.

I have ever considered *intellectual* culture as subordinate to the main end of education, which is, the formation of that character which Jesus Christ teaches to be indispensable to the *eternal* well-being of our race. Excepting the few classes of young children before named, my efforts have been directed to measures for reforming bad, and supplying good, habits and principles in minds already more or less developed by education. And this I consider a much more difficult work than the right training of minds as yet uninjured by pernicious influences.

In reference to the work of reforming mis-educated minds, I have found that the noblest-constructed minds, when greatly mismanaged, are most liable to become the worst, while, at the same time, they most readily yield to reformatory measures; so that, as a general rule, with exceptions of course, I should expect to do the most good to the worst class of pupils, and, in some cases, to make finer characters from this class than from those who, possessing less excitable temperaments, have not fallen so far.

I would also remark that, in the results I should anticipate, in the case to be supposed hereafter, my *chief* hope of success would rest on the *proper* application of those truths and motives which distinguish the *teachings of Jesus Christ* from what is called “*natural religion*,” and by modes of presentation more simple and practical than I have ever seen fully adopted, or than I ever adopted myself when a practical teacher.

With these preliminaries, which I hope will be carefully pondered, and borne in mind as indispensable, I will now suppose that it could be so arranged that, in a given place, containing from ten to fifteen thousand inhabitants, in any part of our country where I ever resided, *all* the children at the age of four shall be placed, six hours a day, for twelve years, under the care of teachers having the same views that I have, and having received that course of training for their office that any state in this Union can secure to the teachers of its children. Let it be so arranged that all these children shall remain till sixteen under these teachers, and also that they shall spend their lives in this city,—and I have no hesitation in saying, I do not believe that *one, no, not a single one*, would fail of proving a respectable and prosperous member of society; nay, more; I believe every one would, at the close of life, find admission into the world of endless peace and love. I say this solemnly, deliberately, and with the full belief that I am upheld by such imperfect experimental trials as I have made, or seen made by others; but, more than this, that I am sustained by the authority of

Heaven, which sets forth this grand palladium of education,—“*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it*”

This sacred maxim surely presents the Divine *imprimatur* to the doctrine that *all children can be trained up in the way they should go, and that, when so trained, they will not depart from it.* Nor does it imply that education *alone* will secure eternal life, without supernatural assistance; but it points to the true method of securing this indispensable aid.

In this view of the case, I can command no language strong enough to express my infinite longings that my countrymen, who, as legislators, have the control of the institutions, the laws, and the wealth, of our *physically* prosperous nation, should be brought to see that they now have in their hands the power of securing to every child in the coming generation, a life of virtue and usefulness here, and an eternity of perfected bliss hereafter. How then can I express, or imagine, the awful responsibility which rests upon them, and which hereafter they must bear before the great Judge of nations, if they suffer the present state of things to go on, bearing, as it does, thousands, and hundreds of thousands, of helpless children, in our country, to hopeless and irretrievable ruin!

Respectfully yours.

C. E. BEECHER.

Free Schools.

¶ We earnestly invite the attention of each one of our readers to the following masterly exposition of the advantages and benefits of the **FREE SCHOOL SYSTEM**, from the pen of the Chief Superintendent of Schools of Upper Canada—a gentleman of the highest literary and moral qualification, and an ardent and devoted friend of Popular Education. The whole subject is treated with a clearness, comprehensiveness and ability which cannot fail to commend it at once to the judgment of every reflecting mind; and we have no where met with so complete a summary of the main arguments relied upon by the friends of the Free School System, as is here presented. We hope it will be generally read and widely circulated.—[*Ed. Dist. School Journal*]

From the *Journal of Education for Upper Canada*, January, 1849.

Address to the Inhabitants of Upper Canada, on the System of Free Schools; by the Chief Superintendent of Schools.

I beg to invite the attention of the Public Press, of District Councillors and School Trustees, of Clergy and magistrates, and of all persons anxious for the education of all Canadian youth, to the principle on which the expense of promoting that object should be defrayed. The School Law authorises two methods, in addition to that of voluntary contribution; the method of rate-bill on parents sending children to school, and the method of assessment on the property of all, and thus securing to the children of all equal access to school instruction.—The discretionary power of adopting either method, is placed by law—where I think it ought to be placed—in the hands of the people themselves in each municipality. My present object is, simply to submit to your consideration the principal reasons which induce me to think that the one of these methods is better than the other, in order to secure to your children the advanta-

ges of a good education. The method which I believe you will find most efficient, has been thus defined: “A tax upon the property of all by the majority for the education of all”

1. My first reason for commending this as the best method of providing for the education of your children is, that the people who have been educated under it for two hundred years, are distinguished for personal independence, general intelligence, great industry, economy and prosperity, and a wide diffusion of the comforts and enjoyments of domestic life. The truth of this remark in reference to the character and condition of the people of the New England States, will, I presume, be disputed by none. If their system of civil government be thought less favorable to the cultivation and exercise of some of the higher virtues than that which we enjoy, the efficacy of their school system is the more apparent under circumstances of comparative disadvantage. I will give the origin of this school system in the words of the English “Quarterly Journal of Education”—published under the superintendence of the society for the diffusion of useful knowledge, and at a time when Lord Brougham was Chairman, and Lord John Russell, Vice-Chairman of the Committee:

“The first hint of this system—the great principle of which is, that the property of all shall be taxed by the majority for the education of all—is to be found in the records of the city of Boston for the year 1635, when, at a public or ‘body’ meeting, a school-master was appointed ‘for the teaching and nurturing of children among us,’ and a portion of the public lands given him for his support. This, it should be remembered, was done within five years after the first peopling of that little peninsula, and before the humblest wants of its inhabitants were supplied; while their very subsistence from year to year, was uncertain; and when no man in the colony slept in his bed without apprehension from the savages, who not only everywhere crossed on their borders, but still dwelt in the midst of them.

“This was soon imitated in other villages and hamlets springing up in the wilderness. Winthrop, the earliest Governor of the colony, and the great patron of Free Schools, says in his journal under date of 1645, that divers Free Schools were erected in that year in other towns, and that in Boston it was determined to allow for ever £50 a year to the master, with a house, and £30 to an usher. But thus far only the individual towns had acted. In 1647, however, the Colonial Assembly of Massachusetts made provision, by law, that every town in which there were fifty families, should keep a Free School, in which reading and writing could be taught; and every town where there were one hundred families, should keep a school where youth could be prepared in Latin, Greek and Mathematics, for the College or University, which in 1638, had been established by the same authority at Cambridge. In 1656 and 1672, the colonies of Connecticut and New-Haven, enacted similar laws; and from this time the system spread with the extending population of that part of America, until it became one of its settled and prominent characteristics, and has so continued to the present day.”

I will now present the character of this system in the words of those who best understand it. That great American Statesman, Daniel Webster, received his early training in a Free School, and stated on one occasion, that had he as many children as old Priam himself, he would send them all to the Free School. Mr. Webster, in his published speech on the Constitution of Massachusetts, expresses himself on the Free School system, in the following words:—

“In this particular, New-England may be allowed to claim, I think, a merit of a peculiar character. She early adopted and has constantly maintained the principle, that it is the undoubted right, and the bounden duty of government, to provide for the instruction of all youth. That which is elsewhere left to chance, or to charity, we secure by law. For the purpose of public instruction, we hold every man subject to taxation in

proportion to his property, and we look not to the question, whether he himself have, or have not, children to be benefited by the education for which he pays. We regard it as a wise and liberal system of police, by which property, and life, and the peace of society are secured. We seek to prevent, in some measure, the extension of the penal code, by inspiring a salutary and conservative principle of virtue and knowledge in an early age. We hope to excite a feeling of respectability and a sense of character, by enlarging the capacity, and increasing the sphere of intellectual enjoyment. By general instruction, we seek, as far as possible, to purify the whole moral atmosphere; to keep good sentiments uppermost, and to turn the strong current of feeling and opinion, as well as the censures of the law, and the denunciations of religion, against immorality and crime. We hope for a security, beyond the law, and above the law, in the prevalence of enlightened and well-principled moral sentiment. We hope to continue and prolong the time, when, in the villages and farm-houses of New-England, there may be undisturbed sleep within unbarred doors. And knowing that our government rests directly on the public will, that we may preserve it, we endeavour to give a safe and proper direction to that public will. We do not, indeed, expect all men to be philosophers or statesmen; but we confidently trust, and our expectation of the duration of our system of government rests on that trust, that by the diffusion of general knowledge and good and virtuous sentiments, the political fabric may be secure, as well against open violence and overthrow, as against the slow but sure undermining of licentiousness."

The Honourable Edward Everett,—late President of Harvard University, late Governor of the State of Massachusetts, and late American Ambassador to England—remarks as follows, in his Address on the "Advantages of Useful Knowledge to working men:"

"Think of the inestimable good conferred on all succeeding generations by the early settlers of America, who first established the system of Public Schools, where instruction should be furnished gratis, to all the children in the community. No such thing was before known in the world. There were Schools and Colleges supported by funds which had been bequeathed by charitable individuals; and in consequence, most of the Common Schools of this kind in Europe, were regarded as establishments for the poor. So deep-rooted is this idea, that when I have been applied to for information as to our Public Schools from those parts where no such system exists, I have frequently found it hard to obtain credit, when I have declared, that there was nothing disreputable in the public opinion here, in sending children to Schools supported at the public charge. The idea of Free Schools for the whole people, when it first crossed the minds of our forefathers, was entirely original; and how much of the prosperity and happiness of their children and posterity has flowed from this living spring of public intelligence."

The following extracts from the Annual School Reports of 1847 and 1848, prepared by the Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, deserve special attention, as well for the beauty of their language as for the nobleness of the sentiments which they express:

"The present year (1847) completes the second century since the Free Schools of Massachusetts were first established. In 1647, when a few scattered and feeble settlements, almost buried in the depths of the forests, were all that constituted the Colony of Massachusetts, when the entire population consisted of twenty-one thousand souls; when the external means of the people were small, their dwellings humble, and their raiment and subsistence scanty and homely; when the whole valuation of all the colonial estates, both public and private, would hardly equal the inventory of many a private individual at the present day; when the fierce eye of the savage was nightly seen glaring from the edge of the surrounding wilderness, and no defence or succour was at hand; it was then, amid all these privations and dangers, that the Pilgrim Fathers conceived the magnifi-

cent idea of a Free and Universal Education for the people; and, amid all their poverty, they stinted themselves to a still scantier pittance; amid all their toils, they imposed upon themselves still more burdensome labors; amid all their perils, they braved still greater dangers, that they might find the time and the means to reduce their grand conception to practice. Two divine ideas filled their great hearts,—their duty to God and to posterity. For the one, they built the Church; for the other, they opened the School. Religion and Knowledge!—two attributes of the same glorious and eternal truth,—and that truth, the only one on which immortal or mortal happiness can be securely founded.

"As an innovation upon all pre-existing policy and usages, the establishment of Free Schools was the boldest ever promulgated, since the commencement of the Christian Era. As a theory, it could have been refuted and silenced by a more formidable array of argument and experience than was ever marshalled against any other opinion of human origin. But time has ratified its soundness. Two centuries now proclaim it to be as wise as it was courageous, as beneficent as it was disinterested. It was one of those grand mental and moral experiments whose effects cannot be determined in a single generation. But now, according to the manner in which human life is computed, we are the sixth generation from its founders, and have we not reason to be grateful both to God and man for its unnumbered blessings? The sincerity of our gratitude must be tested by our efforts to perpetuate and improve what they established."—(Tenth Annual Report to the Board of Education, for 1847, pp 107, 108.)

"The Massachusetts school system represents favorably the system of all the New-England States. Not one of them has an element of prosperity or of permanence, of security against decay within, or the invasion of its rights from without, which ours does not possess. Our law requires that a school should be sustained in every town in the State,—even the smallest and the poorest not being excepted; and that this school shall be as open and free to all the children as the light of day, or the air of heaven. No child is met on the threshold of the school house door, to be asked for money, or whether his parents are native or foreign, whether or not they pay a tax, or what is their faith. The school-house is common property. All about it are enclosures and hedges, indicating private ownership and forbidding intrusion; but there is a spot which even rapacity dares not lay its finger upon. The most avaricious would as soon think of monopolizing the summer cloud, as it comes floating up from the west to shed its treasures upon the thirsty earth, as of monopolizing these fountains of knowledge. Public opinion,—that sovereign in representative governments,—is in harmony with the law. Not unfrequently there is some private opposition, and occasionally it avows itself and assumes an attitude of hostility; but perseverance on the part of the friends of progress always subdues it, and the success of their measures eventually shames it out of existence."—(Eleventh Annual Report, 1848, pp. 88, 89.)

"It is a gratifying circumstance that many of our sister States, convinced by our success, have followed our example; and at the present time, in the rich and populous County of Lancashire, in England, a movement is on foot, led on by some of the best men in the United Kingdom, whose object is to petition Parliament for a charter, empowering that county to establish a system of Free Schools, on a basis similar to ours."—(Ib. p. 24.)

These extracts contain the testimony of the most competent witnesses as to the principles and efficiency of the Free School system; while the well known character of the New-England people, for self-reliance, economy, industry, morality, intelligence and general enterprise, is a sufficient illustration of the influence and tendency of the system, even under the admitted disadvantage of a defective Christianity and a peculiar form of government. What such a system of Schools has accomplished in the less genial climate of New-England under such circumstances, will it not accomplish in Upper

Canada under more favorable circumstances? It is worthy of remark, that in no state or city where the Free School system has been fairly tried, has it ever been abandoned. The inhabitants of New-England who have tried it for two centuries, (and they are second to no people in their rigid notions of economy and individual rights,) regard it as the greatest blessing which their country enjoys, and her highest glory. Other cities, towns and states, are adopting the New-England system of supporting schools as fast as they become acquainted with its principles and operations.

2. This is also the most effectual method of providing the best, as well as the cheapest, school for the youth of each School Section. Our Schools are now often poor and feeble, because a large portion of the best educated inhabitants stand aloof from them, as unworthy of their support, as unfit to educate their children. Thus the Common Schools are frequently left to the care and support of the least instructed part of the population, and are then complained of as inferior in character and badly supported. The Free School system makes every man a supporter of the School according to his property. All persons—and especially the more wealthy—who are thus identified with the School, will feel interested in it; they will be anxious that their contributions to the School should be as effective as possible, and that they themselves may derive all possible benefit from it. When all the inhabitants of a School Section thus become concerned in the School, its character and efficiency will inevitably be advanced. The more wealthy contributors will seek to make the School fit and efficient for the English education of their own children; the Trustees will be under no fears from the disinclination or opposition of particular individuals in employing a suitable teacher and stipulating his salary; and thus is the foundation laid for a good School, adapted to all the youth of the section. The character of the School will be as much advanced as the expense of it to individual parents will be diminished; the son of the poor man, equally with the son of the rich man, will drink from the stream of knowledge at the common fountain, and will experience corresponding elevation of thought, sentiment, feeling and pursuit. Such a sight cannot fail to gladden the heart of Christian Humanity.

3. The Free School system is the true, and I think only effectual remedy for the pernicious and pauperising system which is at present incident to our Common Schools. Many children are now kept from School on the alleged grounds of parental poverty. How far this excuse is well founded, is immaterial to the question in hand; of the fact of the excuse itself, and of its wide-spread blasting influence, there can be no doubt. Trustees of Schools are also invested with authority to exonerate poor parents, desirous of educating their children, from the payment of a School Rate-bill—an additional amount of Rate-bill being imposed on the more wealthy parents of children attending the School, in order to make up the deficiencies occasioned by the exemption of the poorer parents. Such parents are thus invested with the character of paupers; their children are educated as pauper children; while other parents, sooner than attach to themselves and children such a designation, will keep their children from the School altogether—thus entailing upon them the curse of ignorance, if not of idleness, in addition to the misfortune of poverty. Now, while one class of poor children are altogether deprived of the benefits of all education by parental pride or indifference, the other class of them are educated as paupers or as ragged Scholars. Is it not likely that children educated under this character, will imbibe the spirit of it? If we would wish them to feel and act and rely upon themselves as free men when they grow up to manhood, let them be educated in that spirit when young. Such is the spirit of the Free School system. It banishes the very idea of pauperism from the School. No child comes there by sufferance; but every one comes there upon the ground of right. The poor man as well as the rich man pays for the support of the School according to his means; and the

right of his son to the School is thus as legal as that of the rich man's son. It is true, the poor man does not pay as large a tax in the abstract as his rich neighbor; but that does not the less entitle him to the protection of the law; nor should it less entitle him to the advantages provided by law for the education of his children. The grovelling and slavish spirit of pauperism becomes extinct in the atmosphere of the Free School. Pauperism and poor laws are unknown in Free-School countries; and a system of Free Schools would, in less than half a century, supercede their necessity in any country.

4. The system of Free Schools makes the best provision and furnishes the strongest inducements for the education of every youth in each School Section of the land. To compel the education of children by the terror of legal pains and penalties, is at variance with my ideas of the true method of promoting universal education; but to place before parents the strongest motives for educating their children, and to provide the best facilities for that purpose, is alike the dictate of sound policy and Christian patriotism. The Quarterly Rate-bill system holds out an inducement and temptation to a parent to keep his child from the School. The parents temptation and difficulty is increased in proportion to the number of children he has to educate. The Rate-bill is always sufficient to tempt the indifferent parent to keep his child or children from the School; it often compels the poor man to do so, or else to get them educated as paupers. In proportion to the smallness of the School will be the largeness of the Rate-bill on each of the few supporters of it, in order to make up the salary of the Teacher; and as the School diminishes in pupils will the Rate-bill increase on those that remain. The withdrawal of each pupil from the School lessens the resources of the Trustees to fulfil their engagement with the Teacher, and increases the temptation to others to remove their children also. Thus are Trustees often embarrassed and perplexed—Teachers deprived of the best fruits of their labors—good Teachers retiring and poor ones substituted—Schools often closed, and hundreds and thousands of children left without School instruction of any kind. Now, the Free-School system of supporting Schools puts an end to most of these evils. A rate being imposed upon each inhabitant of a School Section according to his means, provision is at once made for the education of every child in such section. Every parent feels that having paid his School-rate, whether little or much, he has paid what the law requires for that year's Common School education of all his children, and that they are all entitled by law to the benefits of the School. However poor a man may be, having paid what the law requires, he can claim the education of his children as a legal right, and not supplicate it as a cringing beggar. His children go to the School, not in the character and spirit of ragged pauperism, but in the ennobling spirit of conscious right, and on equal vantage ground with others. Each parent feeling that he has paid for the education of his children, naturally desires that they may have the benefit of it. While, therefore, the quarterly rate-bill per pupil is a temptation to each parent to keep his children from the School, the annual School rate upon property furnishes each parent with a corresponding inducement to send his children to School, relieving Trustees at the same time from all fear and uncertainty as to the means of providing for the Teacher's salary. It is not, therefore, surprising to find that wherever the Free School system has been tried in Upper Canada or elsewhere, the attendance of pupils at School has increased from fifty to three hundred per cent. The facilities thus provided for the education of each child in a School Section, will leave the ignorant, careless, or unnatural parent without excuse for the educational neglect of his children. The finger of universal reproof and scorn pointed at him will soon prove more powerful than statute law, and without infringing any individual right, will morally compel him, in connection with higher considerations, to send his children to School. This is the system of "compulsory education" I wish

to see every where in operation—the compulsion of provision for the universal education of children—the compulsion of their universal right to be educated—the compulsion of universal interest in the School—the compulsion of universal concentrated opinion in behalf of the education of every child in the land. Under such a system, in the course of ten years, an uneducated Canadian youth would be a monstrous phenomenon.

5. The system of Free Schools may also be commended upon the ground of its tendency to promote unity and mutual affection among the inhabitants of each School division. The imposition of quarterly rate-bills is a source of frequent neighborhood disputes and divisions. The imposition of an annual rate upon all the inhabitants of a School Section according to property puts an end to quarterly ratebill disputes and divisions, unites the feelings as well as the interests of all in one object, and tends to promote that unity and mutual affection which a unity of object and a oneness of interest are calculated to create. The care and interest of one will be the care and interest of all—that is, to have the best School possible;—and the intellectual light of that School, like the material light of heaven, will freely beam upon every child in the School Section.

6. I think the system of Free Schools is, furthermore, most consonant with the true principles and ends of civil government. Can a more noble and economical provision be made for the security of life, liberty and property, than by removing and preventing the accumulation of that ignorance and its attendant vices which are the great sources of insecurity and danger, and the invariable pretext if not justification of despotism? Are any natural rights more fundamental and sacred than those of children to such an education as will fit them for their duties as citizens? If a parent is amenable to the laws who takes away a child's life by violence, or wilfully exposes it to starvation, does he less violate the inherent rights of the child in exposing it to moral and intellectual starvation? It is noble to recognize this inalienable right of infancy and youth by providing for them the means of the education to which they are entitled,—not as children of particular families, but as children of our race and country. And how perfectly does it harmonize with the true principles of civil government, for every man to support the laws and all institutions designed for the common good, according to his ability. This is the acknowledged principle of all just taxation; and it is the true principle of universal education. It links every man to his fellow-man in the obligations of the common interests; it wars with that greatest, meanest foe to all social advancement—the isolation of selfish individuality; and implants and nourishes the spirit of true patriotism by making each man feel that the welfare of the whole society is his welfare—that collective interests are first in order of importance and duty, and separate interests are second. And such relations and obligations have their counterpart in the spirit and injunctions of our Divine Christianity. There, while every man is required to bear his own burden according to his ability, the strong are to aid the weak, and the rich are to supply the deficiencies of the poor. This is the pervading feature and animating spirit of the Christian religion; and it is the basis of that system of supporting public Schools which demands the contribution of the poor man according to his penury, and of the rich man according to his abundance.

7. But against this system of Free Schools, certain objections have been made; the principal of which I will briefly answer.

First objection: "The Common Schools are not fit to educate the children of the higher classes of society, and therefore these classes ought not to be taxed for the support of the Common Schools."

Answer.—The argument of this objection is the very cause of the evil on which the objection itself is

founded. The unnatural and unpatriotic separation of the wealthier classes from the Common Schools, has caused its inefficiency and alleged degradation. Had the wealthy classes been identified with the Common Schools equally with their poorer neighbors,—as is the case in Free School countries—the Common School would have been fit for the education of their children, and proportionably better than it now is for the education of the children of the more numerous common classes of society. In Free School cities and states, the Common Schools are acknowledged to be the best elementary Schools in such cities and states; so much so, that the Governor of the State of Massachusetts remarked at a late School celebration, that if he had the riches of an Astor, he would send all his children through the Common School to the highest institutions in the State. If the wealthy classes can support expensive Private Schools, their influence and exertions would elevate the Common School to an equality with, if not superiority over, any Private School, at less expense to themselves, and to the great benefit of their less affluent neighbors. The support of the education which is essential for the good of all, should be made obligatory upon all; and if all are combined in support of the Common School, it will soon be rendered fit for the English education of all. If persons do not choose to avail themselves of a public institution, that does not release them from the obligations of contributing to its support. It is also worthy of remark, that the Board of Trustees in each city and incorporated town in Upper Canada, has authority to establish Male and Female Primary, Secondary, and High Schools, adapted to the varied intellectual wants of each city and town; while in each country School Section, it requires the united means of intelligence of the whole population to establish and support one thoroughly good School.

Second objection: "It is unjust to tax persons for the support of a School which they do not patronize, and from which they derive no individual benefit."

Answer.—If this objection be well founded, it puts an end to School-tax of every kind, and abolishes School and College endowments of every description; it annihilates all systems of public instruction, and leaves education and Schools to individual caprice and inclination. This doctrine was tried in the Belgian Netherlands after the revolt of Belgium from Holland in 1830; and in the course of five years, educational desolation spread throughout the Kingdom, and the Legislature had to interfere to prevent the population from sinking into semi-barbarism. But the principle of public tax for Schools has been avowed in every School Assessment which has ever been imposed by our Legislature, or by any District Council; the same principle is acted upon in the endowment of a Provincial University, for such endowment is as much public property as any part of the public annual revenue of the country. The principle has been avowed and acted upon by every Republican State of America, as well as by the Province of Canada and the countries of Europe. The only question is, as to the extent to which the principle should be applied—whether to raise a part or the whole of what is required to support the Public School. On this point it may be remarked, that if the principle be applied at all, it should be applied in that way and to that extent which will best promote the object contemplated—namely, the sound education of the people; and experience, as well as the nature of the case, shows, that the free system of supporting Schools is the most, and indeed the only, effectual means of promoting the universal education of the people.

I remark further on this second objection, that if it be sound, then must the institutions of government itself be abandoned. If a man can say, I am not to be taxed for the support of what I do not patronize, or from which I receive no individual benefit, then will many a man be exempted from contributing to support the administration of justice, for he does not patronize

either the Civil or Criminal Courts; nor should he pay a tax for the erection and support of jails, for he seeks no benefit from them. Should it be said, that jails are necessary for the common safety and welfare, I answer, are they more so than Common Schools? Is a jail for the confinement and punishment of criminals more important to a community than a School for education in knowledge and virtue? In all good governments the interests of the majority are the rule of procedure; and in free governments the voice of the majority determines what shall be done by the whole population for the common interests, without reference to isolated individual cases of advantage or disadvantage, of inclination or disinclination. Does not the Common School involve the common interests; and the Free School system supposes a tax upon all by the majority for the education of all.

I observe again on this second objection, that what it assumes as fact is not true. It assumes that none are benefitted by the Common School but those who patronise it. This is the lowest, narrowest and most selfish view of the subject, and indicates a mind the most contracted and grovelling. This view applied to a Provincial University, implies that no persons are benefitted by it except Graduates; applied to criminal jurisprudence and its requisite officers and prisons, it supposes that none are benefitted by them except those whose persons are rescued from the assaults of violence, or whose property is restored from the hands of theft; applied to canals, harbors, roads, &c., this view assumes that no persons derive any benefit from them except those who personally navigate or travel over them. The fact is, that whatever tends to diminish crime and lessen the expenses of criminal jurisprudence, enhances the value of a whole estate of a country or district; and is not this the tendency of good Common School education? And who has not witnessed the expenditure of more money in the detection, imprisonment and punishment of a single uneducated criminal, than would be necessary to educate in the Common School half a dozen children? Is it not better to spend money upon the child than upon the culprit—to prevent crime rather than punish it? Again, whatever adds to the security of property of all kinds increases its value; and does not the proper education of the people do so? Whatever also tends to develop the physical resources of a country, must add to the value of property; and is not this the tendency of the education of the people? Is not education in fact the power of the people to make all the resources of their country tributary to their interests and comforts? And is not this the most obvious and prominent distinguishing feature between an educated and uneducated people—the power of the former, and the powerlessness of the latter, to develop the resources of nature and providence, and make them subservient to human interests and enjoyments? Can this be done without increasing the value of property? I verily believe, that in the sound and universal education of the people, the balance of gain financially is on the side of the wealthier classes. If the poorer classes gain in intellectual power, and in the resources of individual and social happiness, the richer classes gain proportionally, I think more than proportionally, in the enhanced value of their property. As an illustration, take any two neighborhoods, equal in advantages of situation and natural fertility of soil—the one inhabited by an ignorant, and therefore unenterprising, grovelling, if not disorderly, population; the other peopled with a well-educated, and therefore enterprising, intelligent and industrious class of inhabitants. The difference in the value of all real estates in the two neighborhoods is ten if not an hundred-fold greater than the amount of school-tax that has ever been imposed upon it. And yet it is the School that makes the difference in the two neighborhoods; and the larger the field of experiment the more marked will be the difference. Hence in Free-School countries, where the experiment has been so tested as to become a system, there are no warmer advocates of it than men

of the largest property and the greatest intelligence—the profoundest scholars and the ablest statesmen.

It has also been objected, that the lands of absentees ought not to be taxed for the support of Schools in the vicinity of such lands. I answer, the inhabitants of the School Sections in which such lands are situated are continually adding to the value of those lands by their labors and improvements, and are therefore entitled to some return, in the shape of a local School-tax, from such absentee landholders.

The objection that the Free School system is a pauperising system, has been sufficiently answered and exposed in a preceding part of this address. Such a term is only applicable to the present rate bill system, as I have shown; and the application of it to the Free School system is an exhibition of the sheerest ignorance of the subject, or a pitiful manoeuvre of selfishness against the education of the working classes of the people. History is unanimous in the assertion, that the first race of New-England pilgrims were the best educated and most independent class of men that ever planted the standard of colonization in any new country. Yet among these men did the system of Free Schools originate; by their free and intelligent descendants has it been perpetuated and extended; their universal education has triumphed over the comparative barrenness of their soil and the severity of their climate, and made their States the metropolis of American manufactures and mechanic arts, and the seat of the best Colleges and Schools in America. Nor is a page of their educational history disfigured with the narrative of a "Ragged School," or the anomaly of a pauper pupil.

I submit then the great question of Free Schools, or of universal education, (for I hold the two to be synonymous in fact,) to the grave consideration of the Canadian public. I think it properly appertains to the inhabitants of each School municipality to decide for themselves on this subject. I desire no further Legislative interference than to give the inhabitants of each School division the power of supporting their own School as they please. Of the result of their inquiries as to the best mode of supporting their School, I have no doubt; and in that result I read the brightest hope and the greatest wealth of future Canada.

(Signed,)

E. RYERSON.

EDUCATION OFFICE,
Toronto, January, 1849. }

N. B. I have taken no notice of the objection founded upon the inequality and injustice of the assessment laws, in regard to Cities and Towns as well as country School Sections; as that objection lies against the assessment laws, and not against the principle of the Free School system; and as, I trust, the imperfection of the assessment laws will be shortly remedied by Legislative enactment. (Signed,) E. R.

For the District School Journal

Words Fitly Spoken.

Parents and Teachers, who would inculcate any great moral truth, should be careful to seize the proper occasion for so doing.

There is no possibility of estimating the good that a single word may do, when dropped at the right season.

When Lake Erie is still, and calm—when the gentlest breezes are hushed to silence, and not a ripple is seen upon its glassy surface, go to the shore and pick up a tiny pebble and toss it into the quiet depths of those slumbering waters. In an instant it sinks to the bottom; but it has awakened a ripple, that goes on widening and enlarging its circle, until it extends over the broad surface of that great lake; and not a particle of all its mighty mass of waters, but that was moved by that little pebble.

Again go to the top of some towering mountain, and when the waves of that same lake are lashed to fury by the elements,—roll down from that mountain's brow a vast mass of rock, that shall dash like an avalanche along, with an earthquake's shock,—and when it reaches the lake, takes its final plunge, surrounded by the foam of the waters. But its impulsive force is resisted by the conflicting billows, and the force and impulse that might under other circumstances have been felt far and wide, are contracted within a comparatively narrow circle, and that broad lake feels less impulse from the accumulated mass of rock, that struck it with so much fury, than from the tiny pebble, which an infant's hand might have dropped into its bosom.

And thus it is in human life. A single word or thought dropped when those conflicting passions that agitate the human breast are asleep—may settle down into the silent depths of the human heart, and waken a ripple that shall go on widening, and enlarging, until it shall not only affect the whole future life of that individual, but of hundreds more who are within the sphere of his influence.

While on the other hand, when the storm of passion is raging, the most eloquent arguments, and powerful appeals, lose their control over the mind.

A single word, injudiciously spoken, has sent many an individual, "of towering talents," and elevated aims, to a premature grave, with ruined hopes, and blasted expectations. A single word judiciously spoken, has lighted up to glowing brilliancy, the fire of many an immortal mind, that has risen from obscurity, and gone forth to bless mankind.

How important then that the most favorable moment be seized for the inculcation of truth.

N. A. WOODWARD.

District School Journal.

ALBANY, OCTOBER, 1849.

Free Schools—"Hear Both Sides."

The following article is taken from the "Freeman's Journal" of the city of New-York, of the date of Aug. 11. The Journal, although not perhaps the organ of the Roman Catholic Church in this country, is the most widely circulated newspaper advocating the tenets of that church.

The article is very speciously addressed to the prejudices and sectarian pride of the several protestant denominations.

The conclusion to which the Editor would conduct his readers, although he does not express it, may be stated in two parts; 1st, that the state should make no public provision for the education of the people; and 2d, that all education should be under the direction of the church, or of the clergy of some denomination of christians.

We will not attempt to make an argument on this subject. We will, however, put this question to the

people: "Are you willing to abandon and destroy your system of Common Schools, and commit the education of your children to the sectarian institutions, and private schools, established and endowed by the various religious denominations?"

That is the question to be answered at the polls.

COMPULSORY "FREE SCHOOLS."

At the election which is to take place on the first Tuesday of next November, the voters in the State of New-York are to be called upon to say whether the system of schools established by the State, and sustained by a compulsory tax on the citizens at large, is to be extended throughout the State. The taking cognomen of *Free Schools* has been given to this system, because it provides that every citizen, after being compelled to pay his part to the support of the school by law established, is to be as free to send his children to it as the Quaker or Baptist in England is free to attend the services of the Church by law established, for which he is duly tythed whether he goes to it or not. Did this free school system propose sufficient guarantees for a right and sound direction of education by the State, we should, nevertheless, be opposed to it, because it is unconstitutional, and every unconstitutional act must result sooner or later in embarrassments and evil; but the negation of sound principles of education implied in its very conception gives us stronger and multiplied reasons for opposing the measure.

The public sentiment of the community is with us in asserting the necessity of religion in the training of our youth. That sentiment may be unfortunately vague; it may and does differ lamentably in its conceptions of what is false and true in religion, but it nevertheless is pretty tolerably united in the profession of its belief that the influences of religion are necessary for the perpetuity of our political institutions, and for the well being of society.

But, in this country, the State very properly acknowledges its incompetency in matters religious. It can prescribe nothing in the premises; and does it all in simply protecting all religions in their legal rights. If then the State attempts to establish schools in the midst of conflicting religions, it can do so only by making practical negation of them all. Its schools must be independent of religion—void of it. If they be not so they will be a fraud upon its professions, and an injustice to whatever religions are disregarded. If they be honest and impartial, they must be as empty of religion as any broker's office in Wall-street.

Such irreligious schools are then in conflict with the professed public sentiment of the community; and there are but two ways that men attached to any religion can come to countenance them. The first way is by the hope which one or another sect may indulge of being able to control the system by its own influences. This is, however, a feeble reliance. The Presbyterians are the sect which have the most to hope in this way, because they are more politically active, and perhaps more intensely sectarian than any other. During the past four years they have succeeded in billeting one of their ministers, we believe, upon almost every public institution we know of,—from West Point to the Blind Asylum and the Alms House. And yet we know of no sect that has so repeatedly and publicly enforced the necessity of having their children educated in schools under their own supervision. They have good reasons for so doing, and we are persuaded that no one sect need hope to give efficient tone to the public schools of the State.

The other apology for professedly religious men in maintaining such schools, is, that in them nothing shall be taught but what is purely secular, and that the religious education of the children shall be confided to the Sunday instruction of the church, and to the conscience of the parents. If this be true, we must confess ourselves incapable of an abstraction sublime enough to

comprehend it. What we do understand, what we see, what we hear from others who have better opportunities of seeing than we have, gives us the right and forces us to assert that in no community on the face of the earth have the religious needs of its children been in any such ways moderately provided for. We would by no means seem either to undervalue the Sunday instructions, or to excuse parents from the awful responsibilities of bringing up their children christianly. But it is precisely from those who have labored long and with the most zealous devotion in Sunday instruction that we hear it most earnestly asserted, that these exertions are, for the most part, fruitless, when for six days out of seven the children are subjected to the godless influences of godless schools. And on the other hand, it is precisely from those who appreciate most justly parental obligations, that we hear the bitterest lamentations, and the most doleful recitals of the effects of schools which unprotestantize the children of protestants at the expense of unchristianising, and so far uncivilizing every body.

And even supposing schools so constituted as to produce no effect directly injurious to religion, which is the utmost that can be asked; what delusion to suppose that the greater number of parents are in a condition to take charge of the daily religious training of the children? It is the lot of the larger portion of mankind to gain their daily bread by daily and harassing toil; and those who are subjected to this, never have, and never will, as a general rule, attend to the religious training of their children; in fact, in some sense, their apology is good, they *cannot* do it. And among those who are better off in this world's goods who will venture to say that more disposition, or more moral capacity is to be found? Surely, does it need to be argued out that, as a rule too general, the school is necessary to fortify and protect children from the contagion of unhappy influences at home?

And it is therefore that the Catholic Church at first instituted daily schools, which are solely her creation. She instituted them as nurseries, first of religion and its doctrines, and virtues and discipline; and then, subordinately, of science under the guidance and direction of religion. To cut off these daily schools, which the Church established primarily for religious purposes, from the doctrine and discipline of religion for which they were instituted, and to devote them exclusively to secular education, is simply to bastardize the minds and hearts of youth, to substitute the conceits and arrogance of opinionated men for the traditions of Christianity, to raise up a generation of infidels to succeed us, and to resolve all notions of religion into neatly dressed persons and tidily-kept houses.

In the proposed measure of *free schools* for the State of New-York, we see a system of wholesale oppression and unconstitutional legislation to which we intend inviting the attention of the public who are to be interested. We shall do so in no spirit of party. The Methodists, the Presbyterians, and every sect in the State, supposing them to believe their religion worth teaching, and capable of being taught to their children, have the same interest in the subject that we have. And so has every class of community which may prefer choosing the kind of school and the teacher to which they shall commit their children, to having the whole thing arranged by the politicians. A State education is a curse near akin to a State religion. The men who shall pull the wires of political parties are as unfit to be intrusted with one as with the other. We have shown that this project is irreligious—impious would not be too strong a term—and we shall do what we can to show that it is the interest of the community at large to reject it.

Statements of the various misdoings of those in charge of the Free Schools in this city—the perversion and squandering of money—the inefficiency of instruction—the gross injustice practiced, apparently on system, in the appointment of teachers, &c. &c. &c., have been promised us from different quarters. We have been expecting to receive them for months past. Will the

gentlemen who have spoken with us, and all others who have information of an exact and available kind, please to put us in possession of it? We give our readers in another column a morsel of the ordinary proceedings of the Board of Education.

[From the Buffalo Commercial Advertiser.]

Free Schools.

The most important question to be decided at the ensuing election is that of the adoption or rejection of the law passed by the Legislature last winter, providing for the establishment of a general system of free schools throughout this State. We are of opinion, that with comparatively few exceptions, the people of the State are in favor of the law. But it has always been a hard matter to excite any great amount of interest upon an abstract question of this character, and there is more danger that it will be lost by default, than from opposition.

In a country where the highest power lies in the hands of the people—where no other source of political sovereignty is recognized, education is one of the main pillars of the State. As a citizen of equal rights and duties with his fellows, each should thoroughly know the laws and institutions of his country, and understand the whole machinery of its government. The man properly educated is a good, a useful, a patriotic citizen. Our education, hitherto, has been very defective. It formerly was the work more of surrounding circumstances, than the effect of designed exertions. Until recently it has not been regarded of that importance in its general bearing upon the destiny of man, that it ought to be considered. We hold that society owes every child an education, and it is its first great duty towards its members to provide the means of obtaining it. The aggregate property of all civil communities should be considered and held as a fund to provide the means of instruction for all. It is not only as a measure of self-protection that this should be done, but a matter of high and indisputable justice. It is a plain principle of political economy relating to the greatest interest of the whole. And more especially should it be so considered and acted upon in our country, and among the masses. It is one of those reforms of the day, which has partially obtained, and which must not be suffered to rest until it shall become general—become the prevailing principle in all the States. Free Education—based upon the property of the State, we should contend for, nor cease our exertions with anything short of it. A beginning has already been made. Free Schools have been established and in successful operation upon a limited scale for some years past. Every where they have been tried they have gradually overcome all opposition, and established themselves in the public favor. Education is the birth-right of every man in a civilized state. It is one of those inalienable rights which attach to him, and of which he cannot be justly defrauded. We know this proposition has its opponents, among those whose property will be called upon to bear the expense of a general and free system. But the first and essential object of all true government is the protection of the rights of the person. The rights of property are merely an incident—a circumstance arising out of the relation which the one bears to the other. Education, therefore, is one of those things which constitute a legitimate claim upon property.

Then, as a great equalizing principle—as a great moral agent—free education is an essential element of republican institutions. In fact, it is their very life blood—their moving principle, and in this view of the case, demands that it shall be enjoyed by all. And the public mind is fast settling down upon this plain and apparent truth. In the recent Convention which re-modeled our State Constitution, it nearly triumphed, and became a part of the organic law. As it was, power was placed in the hands of the Legislature to adopt a general system of free schools throughout the State. A law was passed for this purpose last winter, but is to be acted upon at

the ballot box in the coming election before it has vitality. All that is required for its success, is activity and agitation on the part of those who feel its importance, and take an active interest in its adoption. Let a work of agitation be commenced—one which will reach the public mind and obtain an *expression*, and the work is *done*. A blessing, rich with momentous results, has been conferred upon the present and future generations, and society has fulfilled one of its most plain and essential duties to its members and to itself.

To urge the importance of education, would be but to repeat truisms, to which we anticipate no dissentient voice. But it cannot, in the connection which it has been placed—in connection with a system of free schools—be too frequently and too earnestly urged upon the attention of all.

The next term of the NORMAL SCHOOL will begin on the 12th of November. The following table will show the number of vacancies in each County, at the close of the present term of the School, which the Town Superintendents will be expected to fill as soon as possible after the first of October. The table also shows the amount of money which each student will receive per term:

COUNTIES.	No. of Vacancies.	Amt. paid to each pupil.
Albany,	Four.	\$0 00
Allegany,	Three.	7 68
Broome,	Two.	4 35
Cattaraugus,	Three.	8 76
Cayuga,	Five.	5 16
Chautauque,	Four.	10 08
Chemung,	Two.	5 94
Chenango,	Four.	3 30
Clinton,	Two.	4 86
Columbia,	Three.	0 87
Cortland,	One.	4 20
Delaware,	Four.	2 31
Dutchess,	Six.	2 19
Erie,	Seven.	9 75
Essex,	Two.	3 78
Franklin,	One.	6 36
Fulton,	One.	1 35
Genesee,	Four.	8 49
Greene,	Four.	1 02
Hamilton,	Three.	2 46
Herkimer,	Three.	2 37
Jefferson,	Five.	4 80
Kings,	Four.	4 33
Lewis,	One.	4 26
Livingston,	Four.	7 14
Madison,	Four.	3 03
Monroe,	Five.	7 53
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Niagara,	Four.	9 00
Oswego,	Seven.	2 79
Onondaga,	Six.	4 38
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Orleans,	Two.	7 71
Oswego,	Four.	5 01
Putnam,	Six.	1 98
Queens,	Two.	3 18
Rensselaer,	Two.	5 01
Richmond,	Five.	0 18
Rockland,	Two.	\$1 74
Saratoga,	Two.	3 66
Schenectady,	Four.	0 90
Schoharie,	Two.	0 45
Seneca,	Three.	0 96
St. Lawrence,	Two.	5 91
Steuben,	Five.	6 18
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Wyoming,	Four.	3 90
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		6 36

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Office of the Secretary of the Regents of the University,—
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T. ROMEYN BECK.

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Waterloo, July 25, 1849.

Waterloo Academy.

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Central High School, Philadelphia, June 15, 1847.

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To Messrs. E. C. & J. BIDDLE.

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